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and which has an edge area, formed by the outer contour or at least one cylinder bore or a water or oil passage in the cylinder head, adjacent to at least one peripheral self-contained cavity, wherein the cavity (2) is filled completely with a hydraulic medium (6).

18. (New) The flat gasket for a reciprocating engine or a driven machine according to Claim 17, wherein the metal sheet (1) is flanged back onto itself in the edge area, forming the cavity (2), and is joined to itself adjacent to the cavity.

19. (New) The flat gasket for a reciprocating engine or a driven machine according to Claim 17, wherein the cavity (2) is enclosed by at least one bead (3) of the metal sheet (1) and a second metal sheet (4) bridging the bead, which are permanently jointed together adjacent to the bead .

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20. (New) The flat gasket for a reciprocating engine or a driven machine according to Claim 19, wherein the metal sheet (1) and the second metal sheet (4) are joined in a fluid-tight manner.

21. (New) The flat gasket for a reciprocating engine or a driven machine according to Claim 19, wherein in the area of the bead (3) the second metal sheet (4) has a second bead (5).

22. (New) The flat gasket for a reciprocating engine or a driven machine according to Claim 21, wherein the second bead (5) has a different design from that of the first bead (3).

23. (New) The flat gasket for a reciprocating engine or a driven machine according to Claim 21, wherein the second bead (5) has a profile with a smaller cross section than the first bead (3).

24. (New) The flat gasket for a reciprocating engine or a driven machine according to Claim 19, wherein the second metal sheet (4) has a second bead (5) in mirror image to the bead (3) of the first metal sheet (1).

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25. (New) The flat gasket for a reciprocating engine or a driven machine according to Claim 19, wherein a third metal sheet (8) is arranged between the first metal sheet (1) and the second metal sheet (4); and the third metal sheet is included in the connection between the first and second metal sheets; and the cavities (2) on both sides of the third metal sheet are in hydraulic connection (16) with one another.

26. (New) The flat gasket for a reciprocating engine or a driven machine according to Claim 25, wherein the third metal sheet (8) in the area of the first and second beads has a third bead (15) having a differently shaped profile.

27. (New) The flat gasket for a reciprocating engine or a driven machine according to Claim 26, wherein the first, second or third beads are subdivided into at least two partial beads (12).

28. (New) The flat gasket for a reciprocating engine or a driven machine according to Claim 17, wherein each cavity (2) is filled with a substance that is liquid at least under operating conditions.

29. (New) The flat gasket for a reciprocating engine or a driven machine according to Claim 28, wherein the substance is formed by a solder.

30. (New) The flat gasket for a reciprocating engine or a driven machine according to Claim 17, wherein the cavity is filled with a polymer material that is plastically or elastically deformable at least under operating conditions.

31. (New) The flat gasket for a reciprocating engine or a driven machine according to Claim 30, wherein the polymer material is formed by a thermoplastic, rubber or silicone.

32. (New) A cylinder head gasket comprising at least two flat gaskets according to Claim 17.--